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The Athenian Mercury.

Tuesday, *May* 28. 1695.

Queſt. 1. *A Young Lady has had the misfortune of falling in love with a young Gentleman, who being over perſwaded, did enter into a Contract with this Lady, upon this Condition; That if ſhe was worth 500 l. as ſhe told him, he would marry her; if not, the contract to be void; now upon a little falling out between them, the Gentleman inquired a little after her fortune; it appeared ſhe was worth but very little, or nothing. Nay, ſhe confeſt ſhe was not worth near ſo much, yet notwithſtanding this, the Gentleman maintain'd her for ſix or ſeven years, but having had great loſſes was forced to go into* Ireland, *in his travel fell in Love with a young Lady worth 500 l. hath gotten her conſent to be marryed; now the Quere is this, whether this Gentleman, ſince the contract is void with the other Lady, may not lawfully marry this young* Iriſh *Lady? Pray your ſpeedy anſwer, for I am to give the Gentleman notice by Poſt of your opinion in the matter.*

Anſw. As for the contract made only on condition of her being worth ſuch a ſumm of mony, it was of no force if the condition failed. But 'tis reaſonable to enquire a little farther into what might be the obligations, or reaſons of his maintaining her ſo long, we doubt 'tis hardly to be ſuppoſed 'twas the pure effect of gratitude for her Love, but that rather 'twas for ſuch favours received as ought and did certainly give her a greater right to him than the utmoſt extent of the contract cou'd do. This he beſt knows, which alone ought to determine his actions.

Queſt. 2. *What is the manner of training up and admitting Souldiers into the* Militia *amongſt the* Turks?

Anſw. A *Turkiſh* Soldier is a Man ſo born, ſo lifted, ſo train'd and exerciſed, as the *Romans* were of old, and as ours ought to be, or rather he is in a worſe condition; for as to thoſe Soldiers who offer themſelves to be lifted, when the *Turk* goes in any *Military* expedition, which they call *Alcangi*, they are little eſteem'd among the *Turks*; but that Soldier is the only man, who is choſen after the manner we ſhall ſhew, and who is continually under his Emperors pay, and is at length advanc'd into the *Sultans* guards. This Soldery is thus choſen, the *Sultan* ſends ſome men every year, into ſeveral provinces, who take away the third, or the fourth child, from Chriſtian families. When the drove of theſe youths arrive at *Conſtantinople*, they who have the moſt ingenious Aſpect are choſen out for the *Domeſtic* uſes of the *Sultan* himſelf, or of the *Baſhaws*, or other Nobles, the reſt are brought into a certain place, where abundance of country men meet and they deſire ſuch, or ſuch a youth from the overſeer of them; he receives from him a piece of Gold, and delivers him the youth he deſires, having firſt taken notice of the youths name, country and condition, with his age and other marks, whereby he may be known all his life long. All theſe being recorded, it is lawful for him, whether he be a *Citizen*, or a Country man, to carry the youth into *Aſia*, or what part of the world ſoever he lives in, and there he uſes him as his ſlave, in continual toile and labour, his food is bread and water and ſometimes a little pottage with fruits, or herbs, his apparel is ſufficient only to defend him againſt the weather. Beſides he is inſtructed in the *Mahometan* Religion; in this ignorance of delights, he grows up into a robuſt and ſturdy fellow; And then he is again demanded of his maſter, and transfer'd to the Wars.

Queſt. 3. *What may we properly underſtand of matter, or extenſion, and wherein may our minds be ſaid to bear any ſimilitude to it?*

Anſw. Malbranch has given us the beſt account we have met with of this ſubject; he tells us, matter, or extention include two properties, the firſt a Capability of receiving different figures, the ſecond a ſuſceptibility of motion; thus alſo the mind of man includes two faculties, *the underſtanding*, which is capable of receiving different *Ideas*; and the will, which is ſuſceptible of variety of Inclinations; we ſhall give ſome ſhort account of the relation, that the firſt property of matter has to the firſt faculty of the mind.

Extenſion is capable of receiving two ſorts of *figures external*, as roundneſs in a piece of wax, *internal* as Configuration, which is proper to all its particles. For 'tis certain that all the particles which make up a piece of wax, are very different in ſhape from thoſe which compoſe a piece of Iron, therefore for diſtinction ſake, that is call'd ſimply a *figure* which is external, and that *Configuration*, which is peculiarly eſſential to the Compoſition of the wax, or that by which it is *what it is*.

Thus alſo the *Ideas* of the Soul are of two ſorts (taking the word *Idea* in General, for whatever the mind immediately apprehends) the firſt *Idea* repreſents ſomething without us, as that of a *Square*, a *houſe*, &c. the ſecond, that ſomething is caus'd within us, as *Senſation*, whether of grief, pleaſure, or the like. And the laſt *Ideas* are only a different manner of the minds eſſence, or being, and for that reaſon are call'd the *Modifications* of the mind. And thus the *Inclinations*, or motions of the ſoul might be call'd the Modifications thereof, for ſince 'tis evident that the Inclination of the will is a manner of the Souls being, 'tis not improperly call'd a Modification of the Soul; even as motion being a manner of Being of the ſame Bodies, may be ſaid to be a Modification of matter.

Queſt. 4. *Whether theſe words in the 34th verſe of the 5th* Chapter *of St.* Matthew, *viz. But I ſay unto you, ſwear not at all, be not a poſitive command of Chriſt to exclude ſwearing formal Oaths before any* Judge, *or* Magiſtrate, *as well as vain Oaths in Converſation?*

Anſw. If you read the whole verſe, you will find that this command is againſt ſwearing in our common communication. For our Saviour here was only explaining that particular Command, *thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*, &c. How often do we find that God Almighty Cenſures the *Iſraelites* by ſwearing by *Baal*, and tells 'em they ſhou'd ſwear in truth and in righteouſneſs by him; do we not find God Almighty ſwearing by himſelf, as *I live ſaith the Lord*, &c. read that paſſage of St. *Paul*, *Men verily ſwear by the greater, and an Oath is a Confirmation unto them for an end of all ſtrife*; this is mention'd not as antiquated Cuſtom, but as that that was in uſe in St. *Pauls* time. In ſhort 'tis granted by the *Quakers* themſelves, that the ten Commandments are all moral and obliging, now the third Commandment has no ſignification at all, if the word *in vain* is not oppos'd to ſomething, and if to any thing it muſt needs be to a Religious mention of the name of God, and atteſting him in truth and righteouſneſs, whenever there ſhall be occaſion for it.

Queſt. 5. *Several parties with me humbly beg you would be pleas'd to anſwer theſe two queſtions, as ſoon as you can: They are as follow; We read in the Book of* Geneſis, That when wicked *Cain* murthered his Righteous Brother *Abel*, he went out of the preſence of the Lord, and dwelt in the Land of *Nodd*, where he took him a Wife: Now the *Queſtion is*, Who this Wife of *Cain* was, and out of what Generation ſhe came,

came, seeing there were (at that time) but Four Persons in the world, Namely, *Adam*, *Eve*, *Cain* and *Abel*?

The Second Question is, When it may be properly said, *A Virgin hath lost her Virginity?*

Answ. 1. Though no more persons were Necessary to be Named, to give us an account of *Cain's* barbarous Murther, yet 'tis certain there were more, by *Cain's* taking him a Wife, which Wife we make no doubt was one of his own sisters.

Answ. 2. When she has it no longer.

Quest. 6. *A Husband and his wife, professing to live under the authority of (and in subjection and sincere obedience to) the Holy Laws of God. The husband sincerely desiring, and most faithfully endeavouring the good of the Soul, and bodies of his wife, and their children, falling into some trouble and being under Restraint; And the wife taking advantage thereof, hath for some time withdrawn her self from (and denies cohabitation with) her husband, and doth conceale her lodgings from him, so that he cannot find where (or with whom) she is, and she doth joyn with his oppressors to add to his troubles, by taking and withholding from him several of his writings; and thereby wholly obstructs all his endeavours, for the good of her self and children, and his discharge out of trouble. This (done by the wife professing as before) hath caused her husband to doubt of the truth of her profession; and her faithfulness to him in his affairs wherein he hath entrusted her: And he greatly fears she is deluded. But he is unwilling to expose her: Therefore Earnestly desires, first your opinion of this deportment of hers, whether it be consistent with the essentials of the* Christian Religion? *And whether she, continuing so doing as before (without Repentance and Reformation) be in any hopeful way of salvation? Whether it be a sin in those that countenance, aid, or assist her in such her doings; and whether such persons do not thereby subject themselves to censures, and actions at Law, for damages. He prays to have your direction to him in this case, what is most Christianlike and prudent for him to do, to Recover her to the performance of her duty to God, her husband and children, which she much neglects: If not obstinately Refuses. In case all be done (that you shall direct) and yet it shou'd fail of its wish'd for end, whether without the breach of Charity, and offending God and his holy Religion; the husband may expose the wife, and utterly forsake and cast her off, taking care for her children? Your care in answering this paper fully, as soon as you can, is very much desired, and expected by several concerned.*

Answ. 'Tis a very difficult matter, if not impossible, to determine rightly in any cause, where but one party has told their tale, for every one is so apt to be prejudiced in favour of their own side that 'tis very seldom that they are just to the truth in their relations. So in your case 'tis not impossible but you may be the guilty person, and have given your wife too much cause to have acted as she has done. Which you are first to consider, and amend, if you are in the wrong, before you can expect any alteration from her. Tho supposing the matter true, as you relate it, you may very well doubt of her Christianity, nor can she expect to be happy either here, or hereafter if she continue in this breach of her fidelity to her husband, and those who encourage her in it are almost as guilty as she. But to amend all this, the best way that you can take is to enquire what dislike she has taken, and if her demands are reasonable, by all means satisfy them. As for the exposing her you'll only cause your self to be laugh'd at by it, and make her ne're the bettter, and if fair and kind usage won't prevail with her to reform, other methods are like to be of little use.

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